

A Fish-Eating Rodent.

A VERY interesting new Mammal has recently been received at the British Museum, in the form of a Fish-eating Rat from the mountain streams of Central Peru. The animal is of about the size of a common house-rat, but has a flattened head, strong and numerous whisker-bristles, and very small eyes and ears, characters which give it a striking resemblance in its physiognomy to some of the aquatic genera of the Insectivora and Carnivora, such as *Potamo-gale*, *Myogale*, *Lutra*, or *Cynogale*. Its swimming powers are evidently very great, as is shown, among other things, by its broad, webbed and strongly-ciliated hind feet, far better developed for this purpose than are those of the ordinary swimming Muridæ, such as our English Water-vole, whose simple vegetarian diet does not necessitate the development of any exceptional swimming powers. In colour, like the common Water Shrew, it has a dark upper side with a whitish belly, and has a markedly bicolor black and white tail.

The chief interest of the new form centres in the fact of its being wholly a fish-eater, and in its having in connection therewith its incisor teeth modified for catching a slippery, active prey by the development of their outer corners into long sharp points, and its intestines altered by the reduction almost to *nil* of its cœcum, an organ in vegetarian Muridæ always of great size and capacity. The stomach of the single specimen obtained contains fish-scales, recognised by Mr. Boulenger as those of *Tetragonopterus alosa*, a fish whose average length is about six inches.

This animal represents quite a new departure in Rodent life-history, for although it is now perfectly well known that the North American Musquash (*Fiber zibethicus*) occasionally feeds on fish caught by itself, yet there is no other Rodent which, as in the case of *Ichthyomys stolzmanni*, as it is proposed to term the new form, wholly lives on fish, to the exclusion of a vegetable diet.

The general relationships of *Ichthyomys* are clearly with the ordinary South American Muridæ, perhaps more especially with those of the *Habrothrix* group, and there is certainly no direct connection with *Fiber*.

The type and only known specimen of this interesting form was obtained by the Polish collector, Mr. J. Kalinowski, at Chanchamayo, Central Peru, in the course of 1891.